

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 209709

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DRAFTED BY EA/IMS:ECINGRAHAM:CCH

APPROVED BY EA - MR. HABIB

S/S - O: J. HOGANSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

S E C R E T STATE 209709

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ID, PO, PT

SUBJECT: INDONESIA AND PORTUGUESE TIMOR

1. PORTUGUESE TIMOR WAS DISCUSSED BRIEFLY DURING SEPTEMBER 5 CALL BY INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR RUSMIN NURYADIN ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB. RUSMIN CONFIRMED THAT INDONESIANS HAD EXPECTED PORTUGUESE SPECIAL ENVOY SANTOS TO HAVE AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENT ON THE SPOT WHILE IN JAKARTA AND HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED TO FIND HE HAD NO SUCH POWERS. GOI CONTINUED TO HOLD THAT PORTUGUESE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR RESTORING ORDER TO THEIR COLONY, RUSMIN SAID, BUT PORTUGUESE HAD TAKEN NO EFFECTIVE STEPS TO DO SO. DESPITE THIS, PRESIDENT SUHARTO WAS DETERMINED TO TAKE NO UNILATERAL ACTION WITHOUT PORTUGUESE ASSENT. INDO-NESEIANS HOPED SITUATION WOULD BE CLARIFIED SOMEWHAT WHEN SANTOS RETURNED TO JAKARTA FROM CURRENT TRIP TO CANBERRA AND TIMOR.

2. MR. HABIB SAID THAT PRESIDENT SUHARTO WAS FOLLOWING
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PAGE 02 STATE 209709

VERY SENSIBLE COURSE IN THE TIMOR PROBLEM. FOR OUR PART,

WE HAD BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO SAY OR DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT COMPLICATE SITUATION FOR GOI. WE RECOGNIZED IMPORTANCE OF THIS PROBLEM FOR INDONESIA AND APPRECIATED HOW

CAUTIOUSLY PRESIDENT SUHARTO WAS HANDLING IT. WE SAW NO ROLE FOR OURSELVES IN THIS PROBLEM, FEELING IT SHOULD BE LEFT ENTIRELY UP TO INDONESIA AND THE OTHER CONCERNED PARTIES, AND WE THOUGHT GOI WOULD PREFER IT THIS WAY.

3. AMBASSADOR RUSMIN SAID INDONESIANS APPRECIATED US POSITION. HE WONDERED, HOWEVER, WHAT OUR ATTITUDE WOULD BE IF ONE OF CONTENDING PARTIES IN TIMOR GAINED UPPER HAND, DECLARED IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE AND ASKED FOR RECOGNITION. IF INDONESIA THEN FELT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO "DRASTIC STEP" OF UNILATERAL ACTION, WHAT WOULD US THINK? MR. HABIB REPLIED THAT HE WOULD RATHER NOT SPECULATE ABOUT HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS BUT WOULD PREFER TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT DEVELOPS. IN GENERAL, HE THOUGHT INDONESIA WOULD BE WISE TO ASSOCIATE THE OTHERS -- AUSTRALIA, MALAYSIA, TIMORESE POPULACE AND PORTUGAL ITSELF -- AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE WITH ANY ACTION THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN. KISSINGER

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